

Model Lesson Plan - Language Arts/Social Studies

Anchor Text

1621 A New Look At Thanksgiving

By Catherine O'Neill Grace and Margaret M. Bruchac with Plimoth Plantation

Fast Facts

<i>Genre</i>	Non-fiction
<i>Suggested Grade Level</i>	5-8 (adaptable for younger and older students)
<i>Tribe (s)</i>	Wampanoag
<i>Place</i>	Plymouth, MA
<i>Time</i>	1621

About the Author and Illustrator

This text was a collaborative effort between the National Geographic Society, Plimoth Plantation and authors Catherine O'Neill Grace and Margaret M. Bruchac (Abenaki). Photographs by Sisse Brimberg and Cotton Coulson.

Text Summary

1621 A New Look At Thanksgiving provides us with a more accurate understanding of the historical events that surround the popular myth of the first Thanksgiving. Students who engage with this text will be exposed to a more inclusive look at history and gain insight into how some of the common themes and issues associated with Thanksgiving have no factual historical basis but were just invented or made up over the years. The authors state the following: "Taking a new look at Thanksgiving means putting aside the myth. It means taking a new look at history. It means questioning what we know. It means recovering lost voices – the voices of the Wampanoag people." (Inside flap front cover)

Materials

Books:

- Grace, Catherine O'Neill and Margaret M. Bruchac with Plimoth Plantation. *1621: A New Look At Thanksgiving*. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society. 2001.
- Seale, Doris (Santee/Cree), Beverly Slapin, and Carolyn Silverman (Cherokee), eds. *Thanksgiving: A Native Perspective*. Berkeley: Oyate. 1998.

Online Resources:

- "History Made Every Day: Desperate Crossing: The Untold Story of the Mayflower " History.com, http://www.history.com/marquee.do?marquee_id=52222 – access video clips.
- Oyate. <http://www.oyate.org/resources.html> (see resources and use *Deconstructing the Myths of "The First Thanksgiving"* - site includes a short and long version of the myths)
- Links to other on-line resources included at the end of the lesson

Implementation Level, Essential Understandings and MT Content Standards

Implementation Levels		Essential Understandings - Big Ideas		Montana Content Standards (references are to 8 th grade benchmarks)	
4	Social Justice	1-There is great diversity between tribes.	4-Tribes reserved a portion of their land-base through treaties.	Literature 4.2, 5.2	Social Studies 1.2, 2.6, 4.2, 4.4, 4.6, 6.5
3	Transformative	2-There is great diversity between individuals within any tribe.	5-History is told from subjective experience and perspective.		
2	Additive	3-Ideologies, traditions, beliefs, and spirituality continue through a system of oral traditions.	6-Federal Indian policies shifted through seven major periods.	Science	Others
1	Contributions		7-Three forms of sovereignty exist in the US - federal, state, & tribal.		

Learning Targets

- I can gain some knowledge about the myths commonly associated with Thanksgiving.
- I can learn some history about the Wampanoag people who interacted with the early colonists.
- I can identify and use primary source materials for learning about historical events.
- I understand that history is a story and can be interpreted in different ways.
- I can analyze historical events using multiple perspectives from those involved to gain a more accurate and inclusive perspective of the topic under study.

Day by Day Plan - Steps

Day 1

Use the activity developed by Oyate to introduce the topic – approximately one 50 minute class period (see day 1 activity resource at the end of the lesson – reprinted with permission from Oyate) After students complete the introductory activity have the class brainstorm ways in which their families celebrate Thanksgiving. Guide the discussion to include historic perspectives on the event. Tell students they will be learning about a more inclusive look at the history surrounding the development of what we now call Thanksgiving.

If time allows, also ask students to review what is written in their Social Studies/History textbook for any information relating to the first Thanksgiving. Have them read their textbooks and make some general notes for future reference. A good tool for evaluating materials for bias is located here on the Office of Public Instruction website (see pages 16-17)
<http://www.opi.mt.gov/pdf/indianed/EvalAmIndianMaterials.pdf>

Day 2

Introduce the book – *1621 A New Look At Thanksgiving* - and distribute additional copies, if you have them, to the class.

Review the text with students – have students read in-class – the reading could be done in small groups if there are not enough copies for all students. This activity could be also be done as an individual homework assignment if there are enough copies for each student.

Have students answer the Guiding Questions using information from the text (individually or in small groups).

Guiding Questions:

Where was the traditional Wampanoag territory?

How did they view the land?

What is oral history?

What was the Wampanoag language called?

What impact did disease have upon the Wampanoag?
Why was it so devastating?

What were the origins of Plymouth Colony?

Why did the colonists think they could just "take" land?

What are some of the common myths associated with Thanksgiving?

What foods were eaten at the 1621 gathering?

In what ways did the Wampanoag help the early colonists?

Day 3

On the board have the following written: Thanksgiving Myths vs. Fact – have students take out a blank sheet of writing paper and make two columns with these headings. Based upon new information from the text have them identify some common Myths on one side of the sheet and then have them write down Facts in the other column. This could be done individually or in small groups. Students should also review their notes from what is written in their history/social studies textbook and analyze them for factual errors. Having students identify incorrect information in a textbook is an interesting activity and really gets students to think about the accuracy of information in regard to the study of American Indian history and perspectives.

Have students report out individually or in small groups the Myth vs. Fact. Highlight common themes on the board to reinforce the main learning targets.

If there is time in class and you have access to a high speed internet connection, have the class watch the on-line clips from the History.com production: "Desperate Crossing, The Untold Story of the Mayflower." Clips are brief and could be used to reinforce what students have learned.

On-line clips can be accessed here...

http://www.history.com/marquee.do?marquee_id=52222

Click on preview – have students watch the brief clips on-line and discuss in class.

Day 4

Students will complete a quiz based upon myth vs. fact regarding the first Thanksgiving. A sample quiz is provided. The Thanksgiving Myths resource developed by Oyate could also be used as a template to make your own assessment questions. Students could also write a short essay about what they have learned about the real history surrounding Thanksgiving.

Lead a brief class discussion on why it is important to look at historical events from multiple perspectives to gain a better sense of history and have a more inclusive understanding of the events that have helped shape our nation.

Assessment

- Use the Guiding Questions based upon the text to assist with formative assessment.
- Participation with in-class reading, assignments and discussion is required of all students.
- A sample Myth vs. Reality quiz is included for summative assessment

Teacher Notes and Cautions

Teacher Background Material

This on-line article from James Loewen also highlights some of the common misconceptions associated with Thanksgiving. Highly recommended reading before you teach the lesson.

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NatNews/message/15622>

James Loewen is the author of the book *Lies My Teacher Told Me - Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong*, updated version 2007, Touchstone (this book has an excellent analysis of the first Thanksgiving and deconstructs some of the common myths – read chapter 3)

Teacher Resources from Plimoth Plantation (visit site for sample lesson plans, information and teaching ideas).

http://www.plimoth.org/education/olc/index_js2.html

<http://www.plimoth.org/education/olc/hpteachg.html>

National Museum of the American Indian also has resources for teaching about Thanksgiving.

<http://www.americanindian.si.edu/subpage.cfm?subpage=education&second=thanksgiving>

Book review of *1621 A New Look At Thanksgiving*

<http://www.socialstudiesforkids.com/articles/bookreviews/review1621.htm>

The book – *1491 New Revelations Of The Americas Before Columbus* – has some good background information regarding what we now call the "first Thanksgiving" – read chapter 2 for his research on the subject.

Visit this link for ideas and activities for teaching about Thanksgiving in a way that does not perpetuate stereotypes or misinformation. The article has some excellent background information and links to other resources that look at Thanksgiving from American Indian perspectives.

http://www.rethinkingschools.org/archive/24_01/24_01_thanksgiving.shtml

Visit this site for information regarding the James Banks Implementation Levels presented above:

National Center for the Study of Adult learning and Literacy. (NCSALL). Vol. 6, Issue B, Feb.

2003."Multicultural Education Connecting Theory to Practice." <http://www.ncsall.net/?id=208>

Vocabulary

(some terms were defined by dictionary.com)

Colonist = a person who settles in a new colony or moves into new country

Myth = an unproved or false collective belief that is used to justify a social institution

Pilgrim = a traveler or wanderer, esp. in a foreign place (please note that dictionary.com incorrectly refers to Pilgrims as being at Plymouth colony – Plimoth settlers did not refer to themselves as pilgrims they called themselves Separatists or Puritans)

Plymouth (Plimoth) = early colony established in 1620 by the Separatists and Puritans.

Sachem = traditional name for chief in the Wampanoag language

Wampanoag = means people of the first light.

Explorers = One that explores, especially one that explores a geographic area

Extension Activities

Have students do small group presentations about what they have learned regarding the Wampanoag people and interactions with early colonists and how the development of Thanksgiving occurred.

Watch clips from the History Channel DVD – "History Made Every Day: Desperate Crossing: The Untold Story of the Mayflower " History.com,
http://www.history.com/marquee.do?marquee_id=52222

Bibliography

Grace, Catherine O'Neill and Margaret M. Bruchac with Plimoth Plantation. *1621: A New Look At Thanksgiving*. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society. 2001.

Loewen, James. *Lies My Teacher Told Me - Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong*. New York: Touchstone Simon & Schuster. updated version 2007.

Mann, Charles C. *1491 New Revelations Of The Americas Before Columbus*. New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Vintage Series. 2006.

Seale, Doris (Santee/Cree), Beverly Slapin, and Carolyn Silverman (Cherokee), eds. *Thanksgiving: A Native Perspective*. Berkeley: Oyate. 1998.

Video - "History Made Every Day: Desperate Crossing: The Untold Story of the Mayflower " History.com, http://www.history.com/marquee.do?marquee_id=52222

Sample Quiz Questions (other myth vs. fact questions are also available from Oyate)

Myth vs. Fact (label M or F)

- _____ 1621 was when the "first Thanksgiving" occurred.
- _____ Wampanoag means "People of the Light".
- _____ The colonists called themselves "Pilgrims".
- _____ Wampanoag people lived in what is now called Massachusetts for thousands of generations.
- _____ The Mayflower voyagers were the first European explorers to visit Wampanoag territory.
- _____ The English colonists stole Wampanoag food supplies.
- _____ The English and Wampanoag people formed an alliance.
- _____ Cranberry sauce and pumpkin pie were served at the 1621 harvest celebration.
- _____ The 1621 harvest celebration consisted of a single large meal.
- _____ 1863 was when Thanksgiving was officially declared a national holiday.

Day 1 Introductory Activity from Oyate © (used with permission)

Title **Indians and Pilgrims: A Simulation-Story**

Level **Grades K-5**

Time **One class period**

Although this activity is simplistic and somewhat melodramatic, its general purpose is twofold: (1) to supplement the numerous accounts—generally from the European or Euroamerican point of view—of the “coming of the Mayflower” and the “settlement of the Plymouth Plantation,” and (2) to supplant the traditional, romanticized acting-out of the “First Thanksgiving” by children dressed as Pilgrims and Indians.

Objective

Students will experience feelings and responses similar to those which may have been felt by the Native people of this land when Europeans arrived and settled here.

Materials

Teacher Resource Sheet: The Story

Procedure

1. Read part 1 of “The Story” and have the students reflect on and respond to the questions. During the discussion emphasize the *differences* of emotions experienced by the children, both in how they feel about the strangers and in what they think will happen to them. Native people differed in their reactions and responses to Europeans on their shores and understanding of these differences helps to eliminate the stereotypical judgment that all Native people responded the same way because they are “all alike.”
2. Read Part 2 of “The Story,” eliciting feelings and responses from the children with the questions at the end. Emphasize again that Native people in this land responded differently to the Europeans. Some, like Massasoit and others, were hospitable. Others felt differently about the people in their land and tried to drive them out. Children will see that, just as their feelings are valid, so too were the Native people’s feelings valid for them.

Title **The Story**

Activity **Indians and Pilgrims: A Simulation-Story**

Part 1

Imagine the Following:

You and your family live in a nice house with a huge yard, lots of trees, a big garden and a pretty little stream. You have lots of friends, lots of pets and plenty of good food to eat. You are safe and snug and very happy.

One day, when you are home alone, a strange object comes slowly into view in the sky. You've never seen anything like it before. It is a strange shape and very large. It lands in your own back yard! Soon very strange-looking people get out; they are dressed in clothes different from yours and talk to each other in a way that you cannot understand.

You are hiding so that they cannot see you. You don't want them to see you because you are trying to figure out who they are and what they want. You have heard about people who look like this from your mother and father. They walk about, pick up your toys and pets and examine them closely. One gets into your car, turns the key and drives all around on the grass and through the garden. Others are helping themselves to the tomatoes in the garden and the apples and plums on the trees. Then they fill a lot of big baskets with the fruit and vegetables from your garden and put them in the big machine they arrived in.

Then they come straight toward your house! Without even ringing the bell, they come through the door and go through every room, picking up things and looking closely at them, talking and laughing among themselves. They really don't seem to be afraid or even embarrassed about being in your house.

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THESE PEOPLE?

WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU WILL DO? WHY?

WHAT DO YOU THINK WILL HAPPEN TO YOU?

Part 2

The Story Goes On...

The strange people leave your house. You think they have seen you but you're not sure. It doesn't matter, though, because you're so glad to see them go. Maybe they'll just get into their big air ship and fly back to wherever they came from. Even if they *have* taken things that belong to you, you'll be happy to see them leave.

But as you watch, they don't seem to be leaving. In fact, they appear to like it in your big backyard. They begin to bring things out of the machine. They set up and saw and cut down one of the biggest trees! They are going to build a house with it, probably in that favorite spot of yours back there by the stream, because that's where they are clearing away the bushes and digging out the grass. They cut down another tree and another and another! They are building two, three, and a half dozen houses. They have furniture and pans and dishes and rugs and curtains—everything that you have in your house and some other things that you don't even recognize. They also have big weapons that flash with a big bang. You think that they could probably kill you with one big *bang* just as they have killed some of the pets in your yard.

You stare at all the activity going on out there in your backyard. Suddenly you start to cry. These strange people who have come from somewhere far off and who are so very rude are *not* going away—ever. They are going to stay. They are going to live in your own backyard and use your garden and your toys and fish in your stream and cut down your trees and act as if it all belonged to them!

Then a very strange thing happens. A group of the strangers have been talking together and pointing toward the very place where you are hiding. Do you think they could have spotted you? Yes! They are coming right toward you, talking and smiling. You don't know what to do. Should you run? Call for help? Stay perfectly still? One, who is close to you than the rest, takes your hand and pulls you out to stand in front of them. They are smiling and pointing at your favorite place by the stream where they are building their houses. They want you to come with them!

As you do, the one holding your hand says: "We like you. We like this place. We are going to live here from now on." Without asking if you are surprised or if you want them here, that person points to a table set with a great feast, smiles and says: "Come. Celebrate with use because we have reached the end of our long journey and have found a wonderful place to live."

HOW DO YOU FEEL?

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

DOES ANYONE KNOW WHO YOU AND THE STRANGERS WHO TOOK OVER YOUR BACKYARD REALLY ARE?